

To: LEP Directors and Testing Coordinators
Cc: District Superintendents and Administrators
Re: DISTRICT FEEDBACK NEEDED: Transitioning to the New English Language Proficiency Assessment for District LEP Students
Date: January 27, 2014

Please forward to the appropriate school personnel, as needed.

This email is being sent out to provide districts with the opportunity to determine the year in which the State of Idaho transitions from the current English language proficiency assessment, for limited English proficient (LEP) students, the Idaho English Language Assessment (IELA), to the ACCESS assessment, which is aligned to the newly State implemented English Language Development Standards for LEP students, the WIDA standards.

Currently, Idaho is scheduled to transition from the IELA to the ACCESS in the Spring of 2016, at which time, the ASSETS Consortium, which Idaho is a member State, will have developed and released the online version of the current paper/pencil ACCESS. The online version of the English proficiency test will be named ACCESS 2.0.

Being that the WIDA standards were adopted on August 12, 2012, by the Idaho State Board of Education, and are currently in their first year of implementation, the question has been asked as to the possibility of transitioning a year earlier to the ACCESS assessment. To make this determination, we are reaching out to Idaho districts to determine which of the following two options would be best for each district.

1. Transition to the ACCESS, paper/pencil version, English proficiency assessment, Spring 2015, and then, again, Spring 2016, to the online version, ACCESS 2.0.
2. Transition to the ACCESS 2.0, online version, English proficiency assessment, Spring 2016.

In order to make an informed decision, we are providing districts with the background in regards to Idaho's English language proficiency assessment and the laws surrounding it, as well as, information in regards to the ACCESS and ACCESS 2.0 English language proficiency assessments; please see attached. In looking at the list of resources Idaho will receive with the new assessment and the comparison of the IELA and ACCESS assessments, it is easy to see that the ACCESS assessment provides our state with a multitude of resources for our LEP students. However, keep in mind that if the State transitions to the ACCESS assessment a year earlier than scheduled, Spring of 2015, this is also the first year the Smarter Balanced Assessment will be administered. Also, districts will be trained on the paper/pencil version, Spring 2015, and then will need to transition, again, a year later to the online version. Yet, on the other hand, a transition to the pencil/paper version a year earlier will give our state's LEP students access to resources aligned to the WIDA standards, a year earlier, and Idaho will have access to resources aligned to the WIDA standards, including the ELL Placement Test and the Alternate ACCESS Assessment for our LEP students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Within districts, please meet with Title III/LEP, Testing/Assessment, and Administrative staff to determine which option would be best for your district. Once a choice has been made, please reply to this email with your option choice, by **Friday, February 21st**. Once we receive your reply, we will respond to indicate that we have received it. If you do not receive a reply from us within 24 hours, please reach out, again, in the event that your reply is caught in our SPAM filter.

On February 24th, we will tally up the responses we receive and go with the option that is chosen by the majority of districts who respond. We will be getting back to districts in the first few weeks of March as to the final decision and next steps.

Please be sure to respond with an option choice; in that, we will only be able to make a final determination based on the district responses we receive.

If you have questions to which you will need answers prior to making a final decision, please be sure to email us before February 14th, so we are able to obtain the needed answers prior to the February 24th deadline.

Thank you,

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